

**CITY OF BELLEVUE  
CITY COUNCIL**

**Summary Minutes of Study Session**

October 21, 2002  
6:00 p.m.

Council Conference Room  
Bellevue, Washington

**PRESENT:** Mayor Marshall, Deputy Mayor Degginger, and Councilmembers Creighton, Davidson, Lee<sup>1</sup>, and Noble

**ABSENT:** Councilmember Mosher

1. **Executive Session**

Deputy Mayor Degginger opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and announced recess to executive session for approximately 90 minutes to discuss two items of property acquisition and one item of potential litigation.

The study session resumed at 7:35 p.m. with Mayor Marshall presiding.

2. **Study Session**

- (a) Development Services Initiative (DSI) – Review of Performance Measures and Reporting

Discussion of this item was postponed to October 28.

- (b) 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mobility Improvement Package

Kris Liljeblad, Assistant Transportation Director, introduced the 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mobility Improvement Package staff team: Steve Sindiong, Senior Planner/Project Manager; Susie Serres, Long-Range Planning Manager; and Katherine Casseday, consultant with David Evans & Associates. David Elliott, Transportation Commission Chair, was present to discuss this project recommended by the Transportation Commission.

Mr. Liljeblad recalled discussions in the late 1990s about a grade separation concept for 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street. In August 1998, Council replaced the project with a TDM (Transportation Demand Management) Feasibility Study to address mobility needs for the

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lee arrived at 6:09 p.m.

corridor. As part of a BROTS (Bel-Red Overlake Transportation Study) Interlocal Agreement in September 1999, Redmond and Bellevue agreed to explore alternatives to address north-south travel within the Overlake area. Council set aside \$500,000 in the 1999-2001 budget to conduct a TDM study. In July 2000, Council directed staff to use the TDM allocation to conduct planning for East Bellevue, including the 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mobility Improvement Package and the BROTS North-South Study. At that time, Council and staff were concerned about concurrency compliance in East Bellevue (Mobility Management Area 9) and balancing the need for both transportation capacity and neighborhood protection.

Mr. Liljeblad displayed a map showing the geographic areas covered by the BROTS North-South Corridor Study, the 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mobility Improvement Package, and the Eastgate/I-90 Corridor Study. All three studies respond to the need for traffic capacity within the city, in part because the regional freeway system is overloaded.

Mr. Liljeblad said the purpose of the 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mobility Improvement Package is to:

- Optimize the north-south travel function of the corridor.
- Reduce congestion and travel time.
- Increase mobility by selecting solutions that minimize impacts to neighborhoods.
- Provide access to neighborhoods.

Staff's vision for the corridor is to maximize its capacity to move people, incorporate public involvement, minimize impacts to neighborhood streets, and preserve the linear park-like character of the corridor.

Mr. Sindiong described the public outreach efforts associated with this project. Initial interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the community including businesses, residents, Bellevue Community College, and pedestrian/bicycle interests. Meetings have been held with the East Bellevue Community Council, Neighborhood Network North, and neighborhood associations. Two open house meetings for citizens were held, one in October 2001 and another in May 2002. Alternatives were presented and discussed at the open house meetings. Articles about the planning effort have been published in "It's Your City" and a project web site was established. The project has also been discussed with the Transportation Commission throughout the study.

Mr. Sindiong said public outreach efforts identified the following key issues:

- Citizens commented that 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue provides a good route to employment and retail centers as well as I-90 and SR 520.
- Congestion is getting worse, especially during the evening commute.
- Some residents find it difficult to get out of their neighborhoods onto 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Better transit service is needed in terms of more routes and increased frequency of service.
- Citizens are resistant to widening the roadway and want to retain the park-like setting of the corridor.
- There are good pedestrian facilities along the corridor, but pedestrian and bicycle access across the corridor could be improved.

Mr. Sindiong said five alternative packages were initially studied and both near-term and mid-term improvements were identified. Recommended near-term improvements include:

1) lengthening the westbound left-turn lane at Lake Hills Boulevard and reconfiguring the crosswalk, and 2) adding a southbound transit/HOV lane on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE between SE 22<sup>nd</sup> and SE 24<sup>th</sup> Streets. Additional features, identified through the West Lake Hills Neighborhood Investment Strategy, are: 1) new sidewalk segments on the north side of SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street where missing, 2) northbound to westbound protected left-turn signal at 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, and 3) sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of SE 22<sup>nd</sup> Street from 145<sup>th</sup> Place to 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Sindiong said the near-term components will improve southbound travel time by 14 percent, side street delays by 34 percent, and overall system delays by 11 percent. The estimated cost of these improvements is \$2.8 million in 2002 dollars. Improvements are to be completed within six years.

Mr. Sindiong described the recommended mid-term improvements to be completed within 12 years: 1) adding a lane on NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to provide dual left turns onto 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 2) adding a southbound transit/HOV lane on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Lake Hills Boulevard to SE 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. The implementation of both near-term and mid-term improvements will improve southbound travel time by 17 percent, side street delays by 34 percent, and overall system delays by 40 percent. Mid-term improvements are estimated to cost \$4.7 million, for a total cost of \$7.5 million over a 12-year period.

Mr. Sindiong said the Transportation Commission recommends all of the improvements. Commissioners suggested project cost estimates should be increased by approximately 10 to 15 percent. They recommended a reevaluation of the political feasibility of the improvements. The Transportation Commission supports the addition of transit/HOV lanes as an incentive for carpool and transit use and in support of the City's ongoing requests for additional transit service.

Mayor Marshall asked staff to return after the regular session to discuss the alternatives initially evaluated. She then asked Mr. Elliott to comment on the Transportation Commission's recommendation.

Mr. Elliott noted the Commission includes two retired highway engineers/construction experts. The commissioners concluded that the project cost estimate should be increased to a more realistic level. Mr. Elliott said commissioners encourage the project team to take into consideration those people who use the corridor but do not necessarily live along it. Commissioners unanimously support the need for these improvements to 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

At 7:58 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared recess to the regular session. The study session resumed at 8:45 p.m.

Mr. Liljeblad commented on previously expressed concerns about the availability of right-of-way between 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets to add the proposed HOV lane on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. He said the right-of-way will be preserved for future use should Council decide to not adopt the recommendation at this time. Mr. Liljeblad noted the corridor is not working well during peak travel periods for either north-south travel along the street or east-west travel across the roadway.

The recommended improvements should help facilitate the flow of east-west traffic. Mr. Liljeblad emphasized that staff is most interested in the near-term improvements, recognizing that regional transportation improvements will not be completed for some time. He said it is important to monitor and manage concurrency compliance in East Bellevue due to traffic congestion in the area. Mr. Liljeblad noted that the proposed addition of dual left-turn lanes at NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue will improve east-west traffic flow.

Mr. Sindiong briefly reviewed the alternatives initially evaluated by staff (Page SS 2-11 of Council packet).

Mr. Noble asked if there are HOV lanes on other city streets in Bellevue. Ms. Serres said there was a HOV lane on NE 4<sup>th</sup> Street prior to the current Access Downtown project construction. She noted other locations in the region with HOV lanes on city streets.

Deputy Mayor Degginger said he is troubled by the proposed HOV/transit lane. He wonders about the long-term effect for the corridor and the neighborhoods. He is concerned about the placement of HOV lanes on arterials and the potential impact on regional transportation policy.

Mayor Marshall concurred with Mr. Degginger and noted the City's long-term vision to keep regional trips on the regional system. Mrs. Marshall is resistant to widening local streets to accommodate regional trips. She would like to know the results of the ongoing studies mentioned at the beginning of the presentation before making a decision about 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She asked whether the primary purpose of evaluating the corridor is to serve local trips or to accommodate surrounding growth. Mayor Marshall concurred with Mr. Degginger that the first three near-term recommendations make sense.

Mr. Creighton questioned how well the proposed transit/HOV lanes will function if buses are stopping periodically and blocking other HOV traffic. He noted the community has opposed previous proposals to widen the corridor.

Mr. Noble is not ready to proceed with the widening of 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Mr. Lee is opposed to widening 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue as well. He feels this does not address the real concern, which is to move people throughout the community. He encouraged staff to explore alternative technologies such as an elevated people-mover or circulator system.

Mr. Creighton questioned whether 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be able to accommodate the increased southbound traffic flow created by an extended left-turn lane on Lake Hills Boulevard. Ms. Serres acknowledged that this is a delicate timing issue. The proposed improvements include a set of recommendations for traffic signal offsets to handle the traffic flow.

Dr. Davidson concurred with Council's concerns about placing HOV lanes on 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He has advocated bus pullout lanes for some time, which transit agencies resist. He echoed Mrs. Marshall's interest in the findings of associated transportation studies prior to considering major modifications to the corridor.

- ➡ Deputy Mayor Degginger moved to adopt 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mobility Improvement Package short-term and mid-term recommendations, with the exception of the two items implementing transit/HOV lanes, as follows: 1) lengthening the westbound left-turn lane at Lake Hills Boulevard and reconfiguring the crosswalk, 2) adding sidewalk segments on the north side of SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street where missing, 3) adding a northbound to westbound protected left-turn signal at 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 4) adding sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of SE 22<sup>nd</sup> Street from 145<sup>th</sup> Place to 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 5) adding a lane on NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to provide dual left turns onto 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Mr. Noble seconded the motion.

Mr. Liljeblad clarified that staff will carry the proposals forward to compete for Capital Investment Program (CIP) and Transportation Facilities Plan (TFP) funds if approved by Council tonight.

Mr. Lee questioned whether the items contained in the motion will be enough to make a difference. Ms. Serres assured him the projects will benefit the corridor. The improvements at Lake Hills Boulevard in particular will provide significant system delay reductions.

Responding to Mr. Noble, Mr. Liljeblad said the Lake Hills Boulevard improvements have been added to the CIP project list but the revised CIP Plan has not yet been approved by Council.

- ➡ The motion to adopt the following 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue Mobility Improvement Package short-term and mid-term recommendations carried by a vote of 6-0:
1. Lengthening the westbound left-turn lane at Lake Hills Boulevard and reconfiguring the crosswalk,
  2. Adding sidewalk segments on the north side of SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street where missing,
  3. Adding a northbound to westbound protected left-turn signal at 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE 8<sup>th</sup> Street,
  4. Adding sidewalks and bike lanes on both sides of SE 22<sup>nd</sup> Street from 145<sup>th</sup> Place to 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and
  5. Adding a lane on NE 8<sup>th</sup> Street to provide dual left turns onto 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

At 9:23 p.m., Mayor Marshall declared the meeting adjourned.

Myrna L. Basich  
City Clerk

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